

# What Stands Behind the Recent Violence in Israel?

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Islamic Theology of Counter Terrorism  
اسلام کے تھیولوجی آف کاؤنٹر ٹیرورازم

In recent days, there has been an escalation in Palestinian terror against Israel. A rocket hit the Southern Israeli city of Be'ersheva. This past weekend, over 20,000 Palestinian rioters amassed along the Gaza border and created major chaos for the Israeli authorities. This incident comes after Israel discovered yet another Gaza terror tunnel last week. Furthermore, two terror attacks also occurred last week, which resulted in two murders and three injuries. The question remains, what stands behind the recent escalation of Palestinian violence?

From the looks of things, it appears that the timing of this recent escalation in violence was not a coincidence. Both Fatah and Hamas are very much opposed to Trump's deal of the century. They wish to do anything in order to take it off the table. For both Fatah and Hamas, their *raison d'être* surrounds opposing Israel's right to exist as a Jewish state. In their world view, any deal that would include the Palestinians being forced to recognize Israel's right to exist would mean that both groups would have to start governing their own people instead blaming all of the Palestinians woes on a convenient scapegoat. The second that this happens, both Fatah and Hamas will have to stop being tyrannical dictatorships and will thus have to deliver services to their people.

Neither Fatah nor Hamas wants to be in a situation where they will have to govern for they are both terror groups. All they know how to do is to incite and fight against Israel. When it comes to state-building, both Fatah and Hamas are complete and utter failures for they value the destruction of Israel over the well-being of their own people. However, Fatah and Hamas' strong desire to destroy Trump's deal of the century is not the only thing that stands behind the recent wave of violence. There are also a number of internal Palestinian issues that would cause an escalation at this particular time.

An anonymous Palestinian source claims that since Abu Mazen has not chosen a candidate for the Palestinian Legislative Council, there are a number of Palestinians contending for the slot and the best way for these candidates to promote themselves is to unite the people behind them via encouraging terror attacks. The source claimed that the candidates include Fatah Jihad Alaloul, a strong Fatah man that is highly supported locally within the Palestinian Authority; Majid Faraj, who is backed by the Americans and accepted by the Israelis; Jabril Rajoub, who is notorious for inciting terror against Israel; Marwan Barghouti, who is imprisoned in Israel for implementing multiple terror attacks against Israelis and Rami Hamdallah, the PA Prime Minister. According to the source, the only thing that unites the Palestinians is violence against Israel and thus implementing terror attacks will help certain candidates to obtain their goal of getting elected.

However, there are those who believe that the incitement and certain actions taken by the PA are the main culprits and do not support the theory that internal politics is the root cause of the escalation. According to Dr. Manfred Gerstenfeld, a prominent scholar on anti-Semitism, the fact that the Palestinian Authority awards criminal behavior against Israelis stands behind the current unrest: "A Palestinian who attacks an Israeli if he is jailed receives ongoing financing for him and his family. If the terrorist is killed, his family will receive an ongoing pension. This can be considered the transfer of the reward concept from the business world into the criminal world."

"In businesses, people who perform well may receive bonuses," he noted. "In the Palestinian reality, the one who performs criminally against Israelis or at least attempts to do so is also rewarded. This system assures that the PA does not have to make any effort to train terrorists themselves. The terrorists can take the initiative.

This makes it also much more difficult for Israel to identify potential murderers.” According to Gerstenfeld, this explains why in the West Bank, most of the recent terror attacks were incidents of lone-wolf attackers going after the Israelis and not the terror groups themselves.

Given this is how the PA operates, Gerstenfeld is very critical of the Europeans for continuing to fund the Palestinian Authority. He describes the European countries who continue to give money to the PA as indirectly accessories to murder: “The Europeans put money in the shirt pocket of the PA so that the PA can use the money in its trouser pocket to pay murderers. Fortunately, enough, the Trump presidency has understood this and has stopped funding the PA.”

Gerstenfeld does not think that the recent stabbing attacks in Israel are related but they may have a copycat effect. He believes that after one terrorist acts, others are emboldened to behave in a similar manner for they think that now is also the time for their moment of glory to come into fruition. This is especially the case given the present incitement in the Palestinian Authority, which happens on a daily basis and is greatly influential in prompting young Palestinians to wage terror attacks. When a young Palestinian girl sees a mural painting of suicide bomber Ayat Al Akhras on a school, this could inspire her to follow in her footsteps. When the PA media reports that another Palestinian has died as a ‘*shahid*’ (martyr), every young Palestinian will want the same level of glory and honor for themselves and their family.

According to the Palestinian Media Watch, Al Hayat Al Jadida frequently glorifies terrorists, calling them “martyrs,” “grooms,” and promotes the view that they represent “glory,” “greatness,” “excellence” and “victory.” Furthermore, four days before the Barkan terror attack, Fatah referred to Muhanned Halabi, who murdered two Israelis, as a “heroic martyr” and then after the terror attack placed the blame squarely on Israel for the two murders. Also last week, the most important religious figure in the Palestinian Authority, Mahmoud Al Habbash, who is very close to Abu Mazen, proclaimed that Jews are the “enemies of Islam” and possess the “culture of Satan.”

If one is exposed to such propaganda on a daily basis, one often holds a negative opinion of Jews and also aspires to engage in terror attacks. It is called peer pressure. In the West, youngsters are pressured to dress a certain way and to like certain sports. But in Palestinian society, such peer pressure has violent consequences. However, Gerstenfeld does not blame the recent escalation on incitement. In Palestinian society, being a ‘*shahid*’ or a prisoner is often the only honorable way to earn a living for ones’ family. For this reason, he believes that what stands behind the recent escalation is the financial incentives given by the Palestinian Authority and believes that the only way to stop the violence is to cut off funding to the Palestinian Authority.

Photo: Chicago Tribune